

## The Effect of Self-Efficacy, Learner Autonomy and Motivation on Pakistani Students' Second Language Learning

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### Abstract

The present study was an attempt to find any correlation between self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning. It was also undertaken to check whether there is any impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation on the learning of a second language which in our case is English language. A concurrent triangulation mixed methods research approach was used. The data was collected from the undergraduate students of purposively selected Pakistani public and private sector universities through an adapted questionnaire. An achievement test based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Mark, 2011) was also used to check the impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning. This test was duly piloted tested, verified and validated by the experts of the field. 15 semi-structured interviews of English language university teachers were also conducted to know their perceptions and importance of these constructs. This study used Bandura's self-efficacy (1977, 1986, 1997), Little's learner autonomy (2007) and Dornyei's motivational L2 self-system theories as the framework of the study.

The collected data was analyzed by using S.P.S.S software. Cronbach Alpha test was used to check the reliability of the adapted questionnaire. Other different tests

like independent separate T-test, ANOVA, Chi-square and descriptive statistics were used to check the correlation and impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning on the undergraduate students of Pakistani universities.

The results of the study indicated that there is a strong correlation between self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in second language learning. However, the impact of these variables in English language learning varied. The impact of self-efficacy in English language learning was moderate and was good in learner autonomy but was excellent in the case of motivation. Among these three variables, motivation remained at the top in its effect in learning English as a second language.

### Introduction

One of the biggest challenges for teachers in Second Language Acquisition classrooms is how to motivate the students for learning another language as most of the students keep questioning like "Why should they learn it?" and "What benefit they are going to get out of it?". Students need an urge and motivation to learn another language. Hence, Motivation has been defined to be an inward urge and force which pushes an individual to perform a thing properly and in a given time

(Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). Motivation is very important and significant to influence learning (Kim, 2004) and can of course be one of the most demanding factors for a student to perform for success from zero through the school (Hardré, Crowson, Debacker & White, 2007).

Sharp and Huett (2006) are of the view that mostly students have no interest in the courses which are of minor value for them and they only read them because they want to graduate. This may adversely affect the learning overall as motivation is on the core of all and is regarded being one of the most crucial and powerful force for a learner to learn or not to learn another language (Dörnyei, 2003; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Clement, 1997; Noels, 2001), so learner inspiration must be given a basic thought whenever planning a course for them (Ahern, Thomas, Tallent-Runnels, Lan, Cooper, Lu, & Arbaugh, 2006).

Motivation has always been given a significant place in education in second language acquisition especially by many prominent researchers like Robert Gardner (1980, 1983, 1985), and Zoltán Dörnyei (1994, 2001) because of its crucial part in shaping the career and destiny of a student. They all stressed that students can better perform and can give interesting results if their motivation towards the task is increased. Students should be provided with that ease where they could find themselves into a situation of language immersion for a quick and better language acquisition. A student who lacks motivation can have an incomplete acquisition of language (Klein, 1986), so instrumental strategies should be increased in and outside of the class to motivate the student.

Self-efficacy is also believed to have association with motivation and motivational self-system of Dörnyei (e.g. Oxford 2011). Chircov (2009) highlighted

the importance of motivation and self-efficacy. A construct claimed that increased level of self-efficacy can result in increased motivation of the student (Subtirelu, 2013; Zhong, 2013). Motivation has also been regarded an essential developmental factor along with self-efficacy (Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015) but if the leaning needs of the students are not met, the students may be left behind in their motivation and performance (Baygi, Ghonsooly, & Ghanizadeh, 2017). Researches were also taken place showing interplay of self-efficacy with learner autonomy (Cotterall & Crabbe, 1999). Many researchers have already noticed this thing that self-efficacy is the key to learner autonomy (Cotterall & Crabbe, 1999, p.161).

Self-efficacy and Learner autonomy are directly proportional to each other because when the students will be aware of their capabilities, they will better be able to execute their tasks in a better way. Same is the case with motivation and learner autonomy. White (2003) studied the effects of motivation on distance learning. He is of the view that motivation increases students' decision power and enables them to perform well when they are to decide for themselves. Here another point is worth stating that some students choose and design their own courses with a lot of zeal and motivation but their motivation cannot sustain for a very long time to achieve success (Harris, 2003; Smith & Sal, 2000).

Riley (1988) considers learner autonomy as a liberal western thought that cannot work in other environments. He says that this concept is ethnographic in nature, depending upon the circumstantial elements of the society but the studies conducted, for example in China, Japan, and Hong Kong positively suggest that even non-Western students like to take charge of their learning and value learner autonomy as an opportunity to facilitate themselves in the

way they want (see Lee, 1998). A study conducted by Benson (2011) hypothesized the importance of motivation, affective and strategy in the development of L2 autonomy. Lin (2013) designed an assessment scale which defines autonomy being the mixture of capability, attitude and performance. He (2015) also carried out a research which suggests the role of teachers in fostering learner autonomy. Xiang and Wu (2016) thinks that linguistic professors take autonomy mainly from double perspectives of "ability and power". A congenial classroom environment can trigger the learner's interest and motivate him/her in becoming an autonomous learner (Joe, Hiver, & Al-Horrie, 2017). Zhang et al., (2017) are of the view that future research needs to focus on the dynamic and psychological nature of autonomy as well.

### Literature Review

Self-efficacy has been defined as a perceived ability to exhibit a particular behavior (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997, 2004). It is an important indicator of many medical behaviors (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Godin & Kok, 1996) which include any bodily activity (Bauman et al., 2012), healthful diet (AbuSabha & Achterberg, 1997), non-smoking behavior (Gwaltney, Metrik, Kahler, & Shiffman, 2009), being non-alcoholic (Adamson, Sellman, & Frampton, 2009), and many other common health benefits (Holden, 1991). It is the most important concept in Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory. This theoretical frame has widely been used in health behavior theories (Glanz & Bishop, 2010). In addition to this, perceived behavioral control has a major role in planned behavior theory which resembles to self-efficacy in many ways. So, it can be said that the idea of self-efficacy is also prevalent in behavior medical science.

The idea of learner autonomy had first of all been brought in language and language education by Henri Holec (1981) that alludes to 'the capacity to assume responsibility for one's own learning' (Benson, 2007). With the passage of time, learner autonomy had become a very dynamic and encouraging issue in teaching and studying as an ever increasing number of nations take developing student' independent learning capacity as among the critical objectives in language educating. A great deal of studies about language learner autonomy have been arisen, including at different themes and advocating expanded research techniques. The measure of relevant research has arrived at a top during the 1990s (e.g. P. Benson and Voller, 1997; Dickinson and Wenden, 1995; Gremmo and Riley, 1995; Little, 1991; Littlewood, 1996). Nonetheless, the later writing has seen "a move towards more basic assessment", and furthermore become more subjective (Benson, 2007). As a rule, there had been expanding exact examinations about language student self-governing throughout the globe since 2000, that predominantly center around four territories: the socio-cultural importance of student independence, educator self-rule, in-class self-sufficient learning and innovation helped self-ruling language teaching (Xu and Zhu, 2013).

The importance of motivation and its prime role in teaching and learning language has become the main concern of educationists for many years. Ellis' (1985) commentary on academic achievement and motivation is notable. He asserts "we don't know whether it is inspiration that produces effective learning or fruitful discovering that improves inspiration". Dweck (1986) stresses that way in which studying achievement only would not be adequate in building and creating gainful persuasive mentalities yet the students should bend over

backward even subsequent to accomplishing execution objectives or defining objectives. Through the perspectives on Deci and Ryan (1992), outside remunerations may be converged in or it might lead to inherent inspiration, when a student is satisfactorily self-decided and disguised. As per Dickinson (1995), accomplishment in studying and upgraded inspiration will happen when a student has more control of his/her own learning interaction. A student may have a specific degree of ownership in studying, in the event that he assumes liability in the learning interaction like arranging, checking and self-assessing. Subsequently natural inspiration would not be a necessity yet be a resource. He likewise believes that, to advance all the more inherently arranged inspiration in students, teachers ought to give input when students share data and not the way students assess. The thought is uphold by Deci who maintains that input must deal both data regarding the movement and support of the student's admittance to self – decided advancement (in Weiner, 1980). Dornyei and Csizer (1998) record student self-sufficiency as one of 'ten decrees' for rousing students. Throughout his book on persuasive techniques, a segment had been dispensed for making student self-sufficiency, including different methods for improving students' feeling of command over their learning.

## Methodology

The research had concurrent triangulation mixed methods to collect the data. An adapted questionnaire was used for the collection of students' responses for the effect of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in Pakistani second language learning students. An achievement test was also carried out from the students to check the impact of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in Pakistani second language

learning students. Lastly, semi-structured interviews of 15 university English language teachers were taken to know their opinions about self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation in Pakistani second language learning students.

## Sample Selection

The researcher had selected undergraduate students of different programs of different public and private universities of the Central Punjab as Dornyei (2009, p. 38) suggested that 'the self-approach may not be appropriate for the pre-secondary students' and Zenter and Renaud (2007) have the same views saying that students cannot vision their future before adolescence. This was the reason undergraduate students were selected, so that they can first of all understand clearly the objectives of the research and then can answer the questions objectively and wisely.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Pilot Study of the Tools

The adapted questionnaire and achievement test were pilot test and the results of them are as below.

**Table 4.1**

*Cronbach's Alpha analysis for the analysis to find out the inter items reliability of the research tool*

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items	No. of Respondents
.92	60	700

The achievement test was tested, verified and validated by the experts of the field.

### Universities wise Description of the Respondents (Students)

**Table 4.2**

*Frequency and percentage of the university wise respondents*

Universities	Frequency	%age
University of Lahore	120	17.1
Ins of Southern Punjab	92	13.1
RIPHAH University	38	5.4
University of Central Punjab	82	11.7
University of Sahiwal	21	3.0
University of Jhang	32	4.6
University of Wah	98	14.0
University of the Punjab	217	31.0
Total	700	100.0

### Academic Year Wise Description of the Respondents (Students)

**Table 4.3**

*Frequency and percentage of the academic year wise respondents*

Academic Year	Frequency	%age
4th Year	122	17.4
3rd Year	203	29.0

2nd Year	195	27.9
1st Year	180	25.7
Total	700	100.0

### Types of University wise Description of the Respondents (Students)

**Table 4.4**

*Frequency and percentage of the types of university wise respondents*

Types of University	Frequency	%age
Public	368	52.6
Private	332	47.4
Total	700	100.0

### Gender wise Description of the Respondents (Students)

**Table 4.5**

*Frequency and percentage of the gender wise respondents*

Gender	Frequency	%age
Male	344	49.1
Female	356	50.9
Total	700	100.0

### Statistical Analysis of the Responses

#### Comparison of University wise students' Self-efficacy on second language Learning



**Table 4.6**

*Analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the analysis to compare university wise students' self-efficacy on second language Learning*

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	168.730	7	24.104	5.291	.000
Within Groups	57380.01	692	82.919		
Total	57548.74	699			

Sig= 0.05

### Comparison of Types of University wise Students' Self-efficacy on Second Language Learning

**Table 4.7**

*Independent sample t-test for the analysis to compare types of university wise students' self-efficacy on second language Learning*

Type of university	N	Mean	Std. D	t	df	Sig.
Public	368	45.25	9.220	-.383	698	.002
Private	332	48.52	8.920			

Sig= 0.05

### Comparison of Types of University wise Students' Motivation on Second Language Learning

**Table 4.8**

*Independent sample t-test for the analysis to compare types of university wise students' motivation on second language Learning*

Type of university	N	Mean	Std. D	t	df	Sig.
Public	368	45.25	9.220	-.383	698	.002
Private	332	48.52	8.920			

Public	368	51.23	11.094	-.370	698	.000
Private	332	44.79	10.805			

Sig= 0.05

### Comparison of Gender wise students' Motivation on second language Learning

*Independent sample t-test for the analysis to compare gender wise students' motivation on second language Learning*

**Table 4.9**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. D	t	df	Sig.
Female	356	44.72	11.407	-.834	698	.000
Male	344	41.41	10.463			

Sig= 0.05

### Frequency and Percentage of Responses of the Students regarding Learner Involvement, a Sub Construct of Learner Autonomy

**Table 4.10**

*Frequency and percentage of responses of the students regarding their learner involvement (N=700)*

S #	Statement	% of Responses								lang uage learn ing, whil e there is signi fican t
		f & %	S A	A	N	D	SD	X	Std. D	
21	I am responsible for my own learning	f %	12 1.7	14 2.0	70 10.0	235 33.6	369 52.7	1.66	.87	
22	I like to study by myself.	f %	8 1.1	44 6.3	86 12.3	307 43.9	255 36.4	1.92	.91	
23	I like to assess my own progress.	f %	1 .1	33 4.7	91 13.0	323 46.1	252 36.0	1.87	.82	
24	I like to decide what to study and when to study.	f %	8 1.1	21 3.0	111 15.9	339 48.4	221 31.6	1.94	.83	
25	I feel comfortable asking for help when I do not understand something.	f %	26 3.7	70 10.0	75 10.7	200 28.6	329 47.0	1.95	1.15	

t= 43.876 to 59.926, Sig=.000, df=699

### Thematic Analysis of the Teachers' Interviews

The responses of the almost every teacher showed that all these concepts are important for the improvement of English language learning in Pakistan. Their amount of presence can be different from student to student but they are necessary. Among these three variables, motivation remained at the top because they thought that it plays the primary role in pushing the learner towards success.

### Finding and Conclusion

#### Finding (To meet research Objectives)

**Objective No.1:** Objective No.1 was "To identify a significant correlation between self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation".

After analysis it was found that there is significant moderate relation between students' self-efficacy and their second language learning, and there is significant positive relationship between students' autonomy and their second

strong relationship between students' motivation and second language learning.

**Objective No. 2:** Objective No.2 was "To examine the effects of self-efficacy, learner autonomy and motivation on English language learning at university level in Pakistan".

After analysis it was found that there is moderate effect of self-efficacy on English language learning at university level in Pakistan because the students who had low level of self-efficacy, they learnt English language in such a way that their academic results changed a bit from bad to average. Majority of them could perform

“average” in English test. The students who were enjoying medium level of self-efficacy, they learnt English language in such a way that majority of them could perform “good”, in English test, and the students who possessed high level of self-efficacy, they learnt English language in such a way that majority of them performed “Very Good” in English language test. The notable thing is that even the students who were enjoying high level of their self-efficacy on second language learning performed up-to “every good” in English test.

**Objective No.3:** Objective No.3 was “To know teachers’ perceptions about these variables (self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and motivation) for the improvement of English language at university level in Pakistan”.

#### *Self-efficacy*

After analysis, it was found that majority of the university teachers perceived that self-efficacy have impact on the learning of students especially when they themselves are committed and well aware of their capabilities or it can have good impact on the learning of the students as it enables them to see their potentials through life experiences, others’ follow-ups. All students were somewhat aware of their self-efficacy and tried to use it in their career, students make different decisions based on their past happenings, peer pressure and future goals.

#### *Learner Autonomy*

After analysis, it was found that majority of the university teachers perceived that learner autonomy have impact on the learning English. According to majority of them if the students let the autonomy in learning any subject, they may show extra interest in their studies and perform extra learning tasks as well and the results of such students have also been better. Moreover, majority of them said that sometimes, they

saw students who were from a well-off background and had taken their early education from some good institution, they seek such liberty as part of their upbringing and early education routine. This trend is being on increase now a days as the world is moving towards teacher less teaching. So, their students have also become conscious of it and have started doing things on their own. They have witnessed many incidences where students got autonomy to do their tasks, they performed excellent, if the teacher is observing them properly.

#### *Motivation*

The result of the present study showed that majority of the university teachers perceived that motivation have ever lasting impact on the students learning English. According to majority of them motivation is very important for everything and when it comes to learning, the importance becomes higher. They said they are positive teachers and keep on motivating their students for their better future. They told their students motivating stories, share with them different anecdotes which motivate them. According to them, English language has its own craze as being the international language and being the gate to many opportunities, so students mostly remain active and motivated in learning it but wherever they saw any problem, they guide and instruct them and things become good.

#### **Answers of the Research Questions**

**Question NO.1:** The question No.1 was “How do Self-Efficacy, Learner Autonomy and Motivation correlate with one another in learning English as a second language at university level in Pakistan?”

After analysis it found that self-efficacy has moderate correlation with learning English as second language. At university level, it was found that majority of the students had poor self-efficacy



regarding English language learning because neither they had mastery experience nor vicarious experience of English language learning. This may be because of the reason that most of our students come from rural backgrounds or from the contexts where literacy is low still. In such areas, they students find less chances to think about themselves as they do not find any role models to follow. They do not mostly know what self-efficacy is and how it can change their career. Moreover, they have poor verbal persuasion, somatic and emotional states because neither their teachers have told them that they are good learner, never learning makes them relaxed nor they have expressed how they admire them for their language skill or never feel alive or pleasant when they studying/learning and never become energized when they studying.

After analysis, poor relationship was found between learner autonomy and English Language learning. It was found that majority of the students were having poor learner autonomy in second language learning at university level. There is poor learner involvement in English learning because students do not take responsibility for their own learning and do not like to study English language by their-selves. Moreover, they neither like to assess their own progress nor they like to decide what to study and when to study. Poor learner reflection was found because it is not important for students to receive feedback from the teacher about how they are progressing or never enjoyed getting feedback from the teacher. Target language use is also very poor at university. It was found that no students spent at least half an hour on listening to some useful English material to improve their listening comprehension every day and do not read certain amount of English material every day. Moreover, students do not enjoy tasks where they can learn on their own and not

prefer to read books, magazines, newspapers all by their-selves without the teacher guidance.

After analysis, strong correlation between motivation and English language learning was found but at university level. For students, learning English is not important because they would not like to travel internationally and do not like English films. They also do not like T.V programs of English-speaking countries nor like to travel to English-speaking countries. There is poor ought to L2 because students have not always looked forward to English classes and studying English is not important for them because they did not make a plan to study abroad. Moreover, neither they learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard nor their dream of their-selves of using English successfully in the future is sometimes so vivid, they feel as though actually experience the situations and do not highlight the text in different colors when they study English.

**Question NO.2:** The question No. 2 was “How do Self-efficacy, Learner Autonomy and Motivation play any role in learning English as a second language at university level in Pakistan?”

After analysis it was found that Self-efficacy play an important role in the learning of students especially when they themselves are committed and well aware of their capabilities or it can have good impact on the learning of the students as it enables them to see their potentials through life experiences, others' follow-ups.

Learner autonomy also plays an important role in the learning English. According to majority of them if the students let the autonomous in learning any subject, they can show extra interest in their studies and perform extra learning tasks as well and the results of such students may have also been better.

Motivation have ever lasting impact

on the students learning English. According to majority of them motivation is very important for everything and when it comes to learning, the importance becomes higher. They said they are positive teachers and keep on motivating their students for their better future. They told their students motivating stories, share them different anecdotes which motivate them. According to them, English language has its own craze as being the international language and being the gateway to many opportunities, so students mostly remain active and motivated in learning it but wherever they see any problem, they guide and instruct them and things become good.

### Conclusion

The research concluded that these concepts though present in the minds of the students remain dormant, until they are made active by the teachers, parents and society. Here, again motivation remained at the top for the successful execution of English as a second language in the context of Pakistani universities. It was recommended that teachers, parents, students and society should understand their individual role in the successful implementation of these concepts in education.

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